



Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Interagency Agreement Signed to Strengthen Services for Georgia's  
Children with Disabilities**

**ATLANTA, Ga., (January 17, 2012)** – On January 10, 2012, the U.S Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children, Youth and Families, Region IV, representing Georgia Head Start Programs; and the East Coast Migrant Head Start Project representing Georgia Migrant/Seasonal Head Start Project Region XII, the Georgia Department of Education, and the Georgia Head Start Association all signed an agreement designed to strengthen cooperative services to children with disabilities. This agreement serves as a model for developing local interagency agreements between Head Start and local education agencies for serving Georgia's children with disabilities, ages three through five.

Federal and state initiatives encourage the development of a continuation of services to provide expanded, least restrictive environment alternatives for young children with disabilities. This collaboration will facilitate the most effective utilization of available resources while minimizing duplication of service delivery.

The agreement outlines the role and responsibility of each of the participating agencies, within the identified areas needed in the delivery of services to preschool children with disabilities. Head Start and Georgia Department of Education have the responsibility to develop and implement a coordinated service system designed to improve results for young children with disabilities and their families. This includes the use of strategies that promote service coordination, accountability for results, and case management to facilitate program linkages, interagency and staff development, and coordination with other projects serving young children with disabilities.

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*Pictured ( front row left to right) :Carlis Williams, Regional Administrator, ACF, Region IV; Belva Weathersby, President, Georgia Head Start Association; Deborah Gay, Director, Division for Special Education; (back row left to right) Beverly Taylor, Program Specialist ACF; Ramona Warren, Executive Officer, Georgia Head Start Association; Jeffery Fredericks, Program Manager, ACF Region IV; Judith Deane, Georgia Program Specialist; Janice Haker, Georgia Head Start State Collaboration Director; Jan Stevenson, 619 Coordinator; Not present for the photo are Dr. John D. Barge, State School Superintendent; John E. Menditto, Chief Executive Officer, East Coast Migrant Project; and Sherrie Moody, State Director, Telamon Corporation.*

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Bright from the Start: Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning is responsible for meeting the child care and early education needs of Georgia's children and their families. It administers the nationally recognized Georgia's Pre-K Program, licenses child care centers and home-based child care, administers federal nutrition programs, and manages voluntary quality enhancement programs.

The department also houses the Head Start State Collaboration Office, distributes federal funding to enhance the quality and availability of child care, and works collaboratively with Georgia child care resource and referral agencies and organizations throughout the state to enhance early care and education. For more information, go to [www.dec.al.gov](http://www.dec.al.gov).